THE McGILL TOTEM POLE.

By C. F. Newcombe, M.D., Victoria, B.C.

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This pole has been in the possession of McGill University for a great number of years, and it seems that the data which must have accompanied it have disappeared. The writer, about ten years ago, obtained, through the kind assistance of Dr. Adams, then in charge of the Redpath Museum, the negative from which the full length plate has been engraved. It was his hope that he might be able to learn, from Indians whose villages he was about to visit, something of the original owner, and the meaning of the various carvings. In this hope, however, he was disappointed. No one could recall the sale of such a pole, but at Masset it was agreed that it bore a close resemblance to a figure in Dr. J. R. Swanton's "The Haida" (Jesup N. Pac. Exped., V, pt. I, '05, p. 127, Pl. V, f. 1).

The two parallel columns will bring out more clearly than a mere description the closeness of this resemblance as regards the carvings:—

The McGill Totem Pole	Dr. Swanton's Model
Top Figure: Small bear on top of narrow cylindrical pole.	Similar, but cylinder segmented.
Second: Large bear with long projecting tongue and a face shown in each ear.	Same, but tongue longer and said to represent a large labret.
Third: Another seated bear with shorter tongue.	Bear shown at full length.
Fourth: Raven, with long projecting beak.	Same.

In each case there are certain small additional figures, which are shown on otherwise unoccupied surfaces of the large carvings. These are not identical, but as they are mainly ornamental and of no significance as crests, this disparity is of no moment.

There is nothing at all like the McGill pole in the large series of photographs of Haida and Tsimshian villages, which represent literally hundreds of totem poles.

MEANING OF FIGURES.

Dr. Swanton's explanation of the model from which the plate quoted was made is as follows, given verbatim:—

"The original of Plate V, Fig. I, belonged to Qogis, Chief of the Point Town People (R. 14), and stood in front of his house, Fort-House (Taodji Naas), on a hill close to Masset. At the bottom, above the doorway of this house, are a frog and a raven. The frog is introduced because ravens were said to eat frogs. All the other figures on this pole illustrate the story of the man who married a grizzly bear. The principal figure of this group, clasping in both hands what has the appearance of a tongue, but what was explained as a long labret, and wearing a dance-hat, is the Grizzly-Bear-Woman; below, and held in her embrace, are her two cubs; while still lower down is the full-length figure of another bear, representing her husband. Sitting on top of the dance-hat is still another cub."

There are several versions of the story to which Dr. Swanton refers. That one quoted by him, which was obtained from a Masset source by Dr. F. Boas, is as follows:

In this version the hunter belonged to the Eagle clan and was named Gats. Unsuccessful in his hunting he was one day seized by a bear which carried him to his den. The she-bear hides him between her legs. The bear goes hunting, and on his return asks his wife what became of the man. She says that he only brought his belt. She marries the man. The dogs (the man has two) return to the village. The people follow them, discover the he-bear, and kill him. The man and the she-bear have a child. Finally he is homesick, and his wife allows him to return.

The she-bear forbids him to look at his former wife. One day he goes hunting with his two human sons. He meets the bear and gives her food.

His companions are afraid. One day when he is drawing water he meets his former (human) wife and smiles at her. Next time when he takes seals to his bear wife her ears are turned forward. She jumps into the water, attacks him, and kills him and his two sons.

In a Tlingit version given by Dr. Boas, the man and his bear wife have three children. The children, according to most of the versions, took the form of bear cubs, but, when indoors, take off their skins and are then human.

If the writer's inference is correct, and if Dr. Swanton's explanation of his plate may be applied to the McGill example, it will follow that only two crests are displayed, and that these are significant of the two great divisions into which the Haida are separated. The grizzly bear is one of the commonest crests used by families belonging to the Raven Clan, and the raven, for some inexplicable reason, is used only by the other division, the Eagle Clan. The remaining smaller figures do not represent crests, but only fill up space artistically and add to the seeming importance of the pole.

Dr. Swanton (l.c. p. 270) states that Qogis, or Qogits, a name meaning "common sea-otter", belonged to a family which originally lived at Rose Spit, at the extreme north-east end of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The name of the family is Kunalanas, the "town-people of the point", and this family was entitled to use certain crests, which are given in this order:—grizzly bear, Tcamaos (a mythical floating snag with magic powers), killer-whale and sea-lion, with, possibly, others.

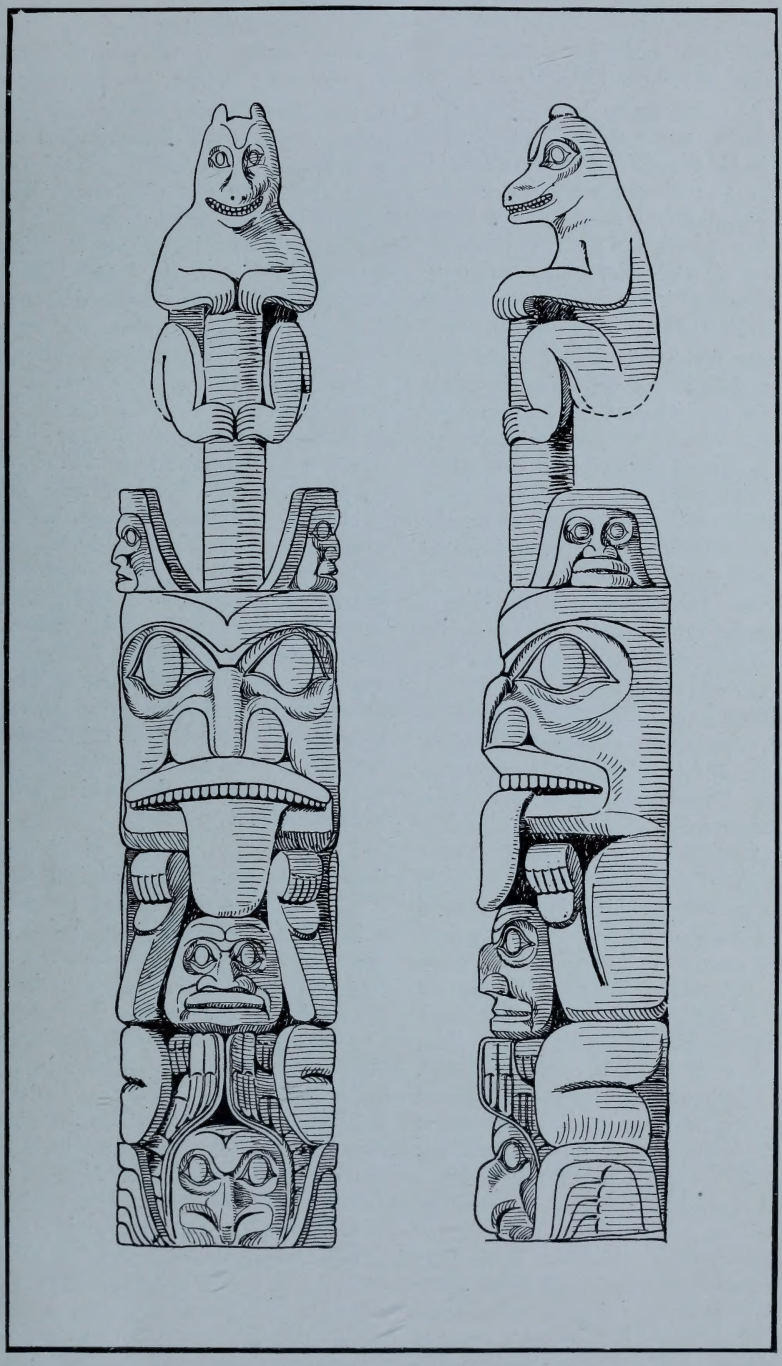
All of these crests are used by the Raven Clan. The raven must have belonged to the wife of Qogis. Both the raven and the grizzly bear are used by a great many families of the two clans and it would be impossible, therefore, without the aid of someone with local knowledge, to determine to whom the pole belonged.

Returning to the consideration of the McGill pole, it will be noticed that in addition to the three larger figures already mentioned there are four smaller ones. Taking these in order from above downwards, the uppermost is placed between the elbows and knees of what the writer supposes to be a female grizzly bear. A somewhat human head is seen above a pair of folded wings, below which is the head of a bird with short curved beak. The lower (he?) bear is holding a frog in its paws. The raven, at the bottom of the pole, shows a seated human figure below its beak. Of these four figures all that can be said is that, in addition to their purpose as ornament, they may also have reference to one or more of the numerous Haida stories. The lowest may quite probably illustrate some incident in which the raven assumed a human form. This it repeatedly did according to the old myths.

Whilst it must be admitted that there are minor differences between the original pole and that which is assumed to be a model of it, these differences are

The McGill Totem Pole, exhibited in the Redpath Museum, Montreal, Que.

certainly less than those which occur in the case of another totem pole, which was acquired by the writer, and a model of it which was obtained by the resident missionary at Masset. The pole in question was purchased for the British Museum from a village close to Masset, and the model was



Architectural drawings of the upper part of the pole.

made at Masset itself. Both of these were described by Dr. A. T. Joyce in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, Vol. XXXIII, 1903, Pls. xix, xx. The model was sent to the Museum in 1898 and the original in 1902 or 1903.

The first mention of totem poles on the north-west coast of America, so far as the writer knows, is that contained in *Cook's Third Voyage* (Vol. II, p. 317, Pl. 42). Two short squat posts are described and illustrated as standing inside a house at Nootka. Cook was unable to find out the meaning of these poles, of which there were numerous examples in the village, owing to want of knowledge of the language of the owners. This was in 1778.

Some years later the Spaniards, who had long occupied Nootka, came to the conclusion that these carvings were simply ornamental and only of significance in respect to the man whose supporters had contributed to the raising and putting in place of such timbers. The writer has purchased many such objects, and in each case it was explained by the seller that the carving represented either an ancestor of his family or some incident where real or mythical animals of supernatural power showed some favor to such an ancestor. (Relacion del viage por los Goletas Sutil y Mexicana, etc., etc., Madrid, 1802, pp. 128, 129.)

The next reference, and this time to poles of Haida make, is contained *in Meares' Voyages* (London, 1790, p. 367). Here, while recounting the experiences of Captain Douglas in the "Iphigenia" at the north-west end of the Queen Charlotte Islands, he speaks of "the great wooden images of Tartanee" but gives no further description of them. Fortunately, two years later, this place was visited by a French ship, the *Solide*, and many pages of the journal of the voyage are devoted to an account of this region. (Marchand, Voyage Autour du Monde; Paris, Tome I, 288-362). On pages 299-300 is a passage, too long to quote in full, which states that the door of the houses was elliptical, about three feet high and two wide and passed through the base of a large high trunk placed vertically in front of the centre of the houses. The door took the form of a gaping mouth, and was surmounted by a hooked beak about two feet long, proportioned in size to the monstrous figure to which it belonged. Above this was a squatting human figure and above this again a gigantic statue of a man in an erect position, wearing a hat of sugar-loaf shape, the height of which was almost equal to that of the man himself. On those parts of the surface not occupied by the principal subjects there were scattered here and there carvings of frogs or toads, lizards and other animals and the limbs of the human body. It was explained by a chief that the erect human figure represented a man of high rank who was venerated in this country.

It was learned independently, both by Dr. Swanton and the writer, that in the early days instead of poles the Haida used large cedar planks for the display of their crests, etc., in front of their homes, and that the doorway often passed through the centre of these planks. That the use of this flat form overlapped that of the cylindrical one is indicated by the fact that the writer was able to procure a very old specimen at Skidegate for the Provincial Museum at Victoria, B.C. This form was also in use up to a late date at nearly all of the Haida villages to show the crest of the occupants of large mortuaries. The only specimen still in existence known to the writer was procured from Skedans by the writer for the Field Museum of Natural History at Chicago. The mortuary form closely resembled that of the large carved chests showing the head of some animal in bold solid work while the limbs are shown on each side of the central head outlined by deep incised work, and all painted in the usual colors. It is clear that Marchand's description of two tablets seen by his party at the west end of what is now called Lucy Island, close to Dadens (Tartanee of Douglas), applies to carvings of this kind. These were eight or nine feet long by five in height, and were made of two planks joined together. Represented on them in red, black and green colors were seen the different parts of the human body covering the whole surface. (Marchand, l.c., p. 295).

Respecting the antiquity of the style of totemic display afforded by the vertical poles, the older Haida say that they are of comparatively recent origin, and that tradition says that they were not made until iron chisels came into use. It is believed that iron tools were unknown to the inhabitants of the north-west coast before the Russians made their appearance in what are now Alaskan waters. This would be about the year 1741. In 1774, when the coast of British Columbia was first discovered, iron tools were noticed by the Spaniards under Perez in the possession of the natives both of the Queen Charlotte Islands and of Nootka. (Documents from the Sutro Collection, Historical Soc. of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1891, pp. 121, 132, 203.) Iron tools were more plentiful, apparently, when Cook visited Nootka in 1778, as he speaks of seeing at this place iron ornaments, arrow points, chisels and knives with thin curved blades. (Cook's Third Voyage, II, pp. 271, 330.) Cook was of the opinion that iron was too common, in too many hands, and its use too well known for the natives to have had the first knowledge of it quite recently or by an accidental supply from a ship. Nevertheless,

it was in great demand, and, even in 1789, after free distribution of this material by other traders, Captain Gray of the *Lady Washington* was able to purchase a large number of sea-otter skins at the rate of one chisel each. Already, too, delicate carving on horn and bone was found at several localities.

TOTEMISM AMONGST THE HAIDA.

Crests.—As stated by Swanton (l.c., 107), each Haida family had the right to use a certain number of crests, *i.e.*, figures of animals and certain other objects during a potlatch; or they might represent them upon their houses or any of their property, and tattoo them upon their bodies. With one or two exceptions the two clans already mentioned, the Raven and the Eagle, use crests which are distinct from one another. Of the two sets of crests the Raven Clan, which is considered to be older than the Eagle Clan, uses the killer-whale universally, and nearly every Eagle family uses the eagle.

Of the Raven crests the grizzly-bear is next to the killer-whale in frequency of occurrence, with the rainbow and supernatural snag next in order. Swanton records thirty-three Raven crests in all.

Of the Eagle crests, next to the eagle itself follow the beaver, sculpin, frog, whale and raven in frequency. Swanton lists thirty Eagle crests in all.

Although there are traces which indicate that the personal manitou and the religious ideas of the Haida may have had some part to play in the development of their crest system in early days, at present these influences seem to be very weak, and it has now become a kind of heraldry by which an individual may make known his or her rank and position in the social scale.

Some of the old chiefs say that until of late years totem poles could not be erected by women, but for a long period, only ending with the cessation of the potlatch and the old ceremonial customs, it was not uncommon for the woman's crest to be carved upon her husband's pole and, when her body was placed in a vertical mortuary pole, to have her crest alone in front of her coffin. A fine specimen of this from the Haida village Tanu is in the Museum at Victoria, B.C.

As compared with similar carvings amongst other native stocks in British Columbia, Haida totem poles are, in general, of wider proportions than those of the Nass River and Skeena peoples, Tsimshian, and of more regular lines than those of the Kwakiutl, a people who seem to have a much more grotesque imagination. Of late years the Kwakiutl and the Nootkans of the west coast of Vancouver Island have endeavored to copy the Haida style of carving and examples may now be seen at Nootka itself and at Ehatisett, whilst more numerous specimens have quite recently been erected at Fort Rupert, Gwaestums, Tsatsichnukwomi and Tlaoitsis amongst the Kwakiutl.

LOCATION OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN THE OTTAWA VALLEY.

By J. KEELE, OTTAWA.

(Continued from page 97.)

The Bonnechere river enters the Ottawa about 12 miles above the mouth of the Madawaska, and like the latter has its source in the Algonquin Provincial Park in the Laurentian highland.

The French Canadians, who were always among the pioneers in lumbering operations, called it the river of "good living" or Bonnechere, probably on account of the good quality and quantity of the pine along its banks, the ease of navigation and the abundance of game and fish.

The valley of the Bonnechere is one of the most remarkable physical features of the region and unlike the other tributary streams its valley is deeply indented far into the Laurentian upland.

The physical geography of this valley has never been studied in detail by anyone, so that only the most superficial facts concerning it are known. Its origin and history are certain to furnish interesting and difficult problems to the future physiographer.

The valley is quite narrow in the lower part but above the town of Renfrew it opens out in wide plain-like expanses trending in a northwesterly direction. From 35 to 50 miles west of the Ottawa the valley is occupied by two large lakes, Golden lake and Round lake, which are situated directly on the course of the river. The difference in elevation between Round lake and the Ottawa is about 335 feet. This drop is taken up by five chutes or falls, three of which have towns or villages situated on them. Renfrew is on the second chute, Douglas on the third chute, and Eganville on the fifth chute.

The valley is bounded by escarpments of gigantic rocks, the northern escarpment being comparatively low and broken by smaller tributary and through